

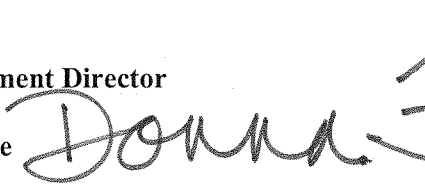


**COUNCILMEMBER DONNA FRYE**  
**Council District Six**  
**City of San Diego**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** May 27, 2009

**TO:** Mayor Jerry Sanders  
Jim Barrett, Water Department Director

**FROM:** Councilmember Donna Frye 

**SUBJECT:** City Policy on Disinfection and Flushing of New Water Mains

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My office has received many calls about the flushing of millions of gallons of water into Clairemont storm drains as part of the City's Water Department Capital Improvement Program. Due to the large volume of these complaints, my office requested a written response (see attached on back) from the Water Department explaining why this is occurring.

In this statement, it is mentioned that "The Water Department has been actively looking at potential alternatives to capture and reuse the flushed water runoff. Currently, those alternatives come at a relatively high cost, and there are anticipated regulatory hurdles that have to be passed."

Given the fact that the City has entered into a Level 2 Drought Condition, which encourages residents to modify their typical water usage in an effort to conserve, I am requesting a written update on the abovementioned potential alternatives to this policy. Please provide my office with a response within 30 days so that I may place this issue on an upcoming agenda at my Natural Resources & Culture (NR&C) Committee.

Although the Clairemont main replacement project will soon be complete, our City's many other aging water mains will continue to need replacement. It will be prudent to revisit this policy so our City can begin reusing water in more productive ways.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important issue.

CC: Honorable City Councilmembers  
Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst

DF/kc

## **Disinfection and Flushing of New Water Mains**

California's water supply shortage requires that we all look for new ways to conserve that resource in the course of our daily operations. One of the Water Department's operations most visible to the public is the disinfection and flushing of water mains when new pipelines are installed. This process is required by the Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Public Health and the American Water Works Association to ensure and maintain a safe drinking water supply.

The Water Department Capital Improvement Program includes replacement of 20 miles of cast iron water mains per year. All new water mains and temporary pipelines associated with this effort require disinfection prior to their being tested and placed into service. After disinfection, and before the pipe is connected to the existing distribution system, the pipes are flushed with potable water in order to remove any contaminants. After this flushing bacteriological tests are performed. The flushed water typically runs into the storm drain after a chlorine neutralization process. Bacteriological tests are completed by the Water Department laboratory and once the laboratory confirms that the bacteriological test results are within the State of California parameters, the new pipe is connected to the existing system. This pipe line disinfection, flushing and bacteriological testing is performed to ensure the high quality of water provided to residents and businesses.

The Water Department has been actively looking at potential alternatives to capture and reuse the flushed water runoff. Currently, those alternatives come at a relatively high cost, and there are anticipated regulatory hurdles that have to be passed. Without considering regulatory requirements, it would cost over \$200 to collect and transport one water truck full (4,000 gallons) of runoff.

The total water used annually for flushing the water mains is estimated at 10 to 15 million gallons per year. This is less than 0.02 percent of Water Department annual supply (Daily Average Supply of over 200 Million Gallons).